

Indeed, one of Brigham Young's chief purposes in building the Provo Canyon road was to make this timber readily available.²⁰ In this region were millions of board feet of marketable saw timber. In addition to the main stands of Douglas fir and Engelmann spruce there were vast stands of aspen and scattered stands of white and alpine fir, all of which were heavily logged as the region was opened.

Saw mills began to spring forth all over the valley as soon as the settlers arrived. In the winter of 1859-60 William Meeks and James Adams with companions went up Center Creek Canyon and got out timber for a saw mill. This was the pioneer saw mill in the Provo Valley, and it began turning out lumber in the fall of 1860.²¹

²⁰*Journal History*, June 6, 1858, p. 2.

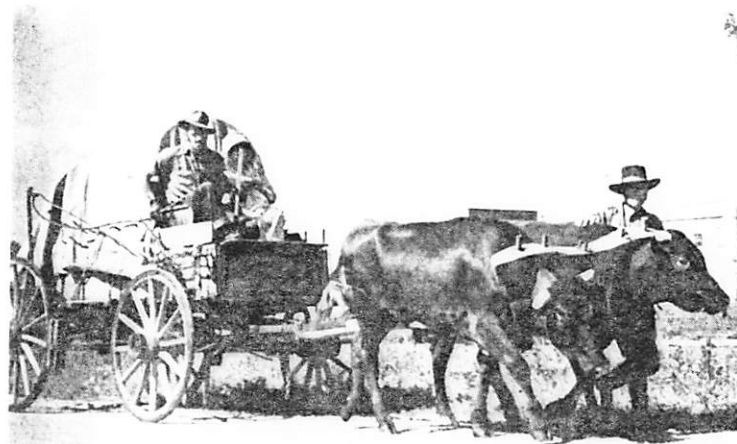
²¹Crook, "History of Wasatch County," *op. cit.*, p. 7.



Thacker's early sawmill: Charles Thacker standing center and John M. Thacker right rear.

Next was Peter Shirts with a mill on Snake Creek, followed by the Lake Creek Mills of Nicol and Alexander, the Carroll mill in Heber, and the Watkins mill on Deer Creek. Other mills were built by Forman on Daniel Creek. Henry Coleman on the lower Snake Creek, and McGuire, Turner and Campbell mills on the South Fork of Provo River.

The mills were first run with water power from the creeks but later steam was introduced. Logging was done with oxen, and it would be difficult to overestimate the importance of these animals in the pioneering venture. They were particularly valuable in lumbering. Here they were preferred even over horses. They were steady and not easily excited. Where horses, when pulling a heavy load would saw back and forth or would balk, the oxen would steady down and pull harder and harder. Oxen could get over the logs easier and could go



Freighting by oxen

through loose mud and snow where horses would bog down. Oxen were not as expensive as horses since they did not require grain for feed.

Dave Thacker reports an experience of Homer

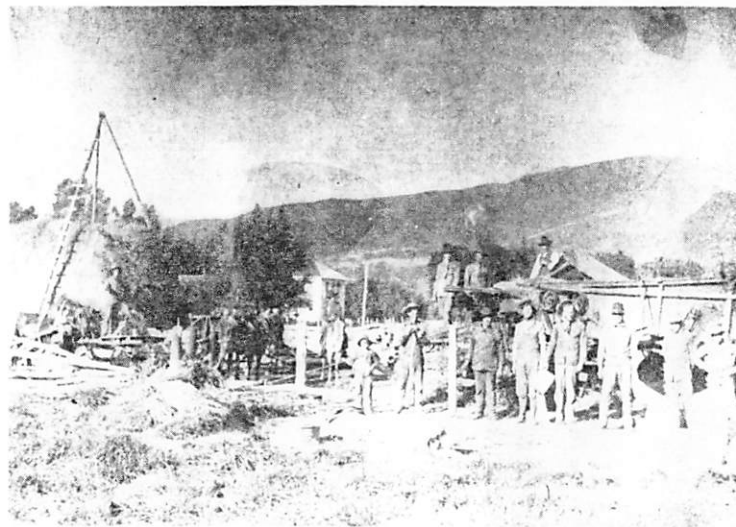


Early plastering crew: Alfred Duke, Robert McKnight, Teenie Duke, Joe Duke, John Duke, Jr. Teenie Duke was paper hanging,

Fraughton's which illustrates how well oxen could be handled. Fraughton was logging for one of the mills in the hollow. He was digging around a log to work a chain under it when the log rolled on his leg. He knew his leg would be severely injured if the log were not rolled off the same way. By working until he had a roll hitch on the log he was able, even in his lying position, to direct the oxen verbally in removing the log without injury to his leg.²²

²²Julia Anderson, "Lumbering in Wasatch County," MSS, (Daughters of Utah Pioneers Historical Collection, Heber, 1952), p. 13.

Life was hard at the lumber camps both for owner and laborers. The mill owner's family usually lived right at the mill and his wife or older daughters did the cooking for the crews.



Threshing crew in Midway

Sawed lumber was used as building material in the valley or shipped to some of the central Utah settlements. When mining activity in the Park City region began much of the lumber was shipped there for use in the mines. William Gardner, the early Mormon explorer of the valley, thought that timbers could be floated down the Provo River to the market in Provo City, but this did not prove practical.

Two special lumbering activities in the county were the manufacture of shingles from Engelmann spruce and excelsior packing from quaking aspen.

LUMBERING

When William Gardner made his report to Brigham Young of the exploration of the Provo and Weber river valleys he told of the plentiful supply of timber there.

¹⁷*Wasatch Wave*, December 21, 1906.

¹⁸Emily Coleman, interview, 1952.

¹⁹Lethe Tatge, interview, 1952.

1125

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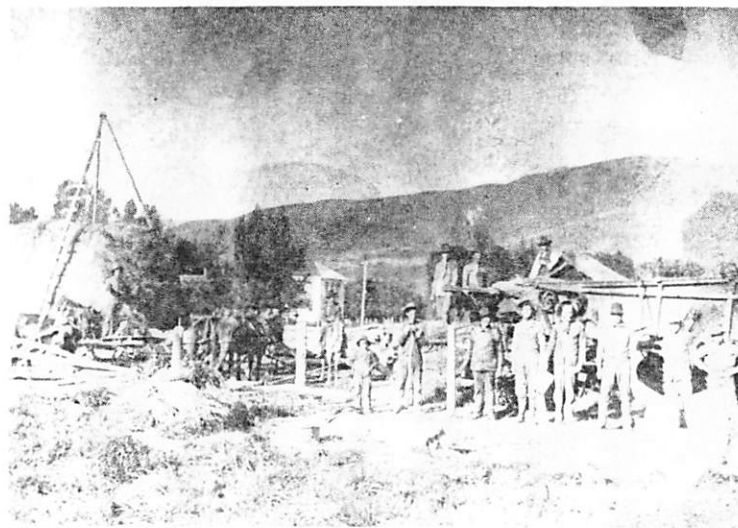


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